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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: AEC CHAIR PESSIMISTIC FOLLOWING BASHIR MEETING

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez, reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: AEC Chairman Tom Vraalsen provided a readout November 1 to AEC Coordinators on his October 31 meeting with GOS President Al-Bashir. Vraalsen said Bashir was positive about the importance of the AEC and of the two-year report. However, the embittered Vraalsen left convinced that the National Congress Party (NCP) was unwilling to make any real concessions to the SPLM on CPA implementation, particularly on Abyei. Bashir said the President was dismissive of First Vice President Salva Kiir, and of the SPLM and Southerners in general. He expressed confidence that the NCP would be the winners in any confrontation with the SPLM. Vraalsen said that the President ignored his warnings regarding the consequences of a lack of progress on CPA implementation. End Summary.

BASHIR SINGS PRAISES OF THE AEC

¶2. (U) Vraalsen said he first met with Minister of the Presidency Bakri, who praised the institution and the work of the AEC. In particular, he praised the importance of the two-year report by the AEC Working Groups (something the NCP intends to tout since it will show a lot of CPA progress). Bakri stressed that he would first digest the report before passing it to the President with his comments on Sunday.

¶3. (C) Next Vraalsen met with Bashir and Presidential Adviser Dr. Sayed Al-Khateeb. According to Vraalsen Bashir praised the AEC as "the most important commission." Vraalsen said he found the praise somewhat surreal, given the personal attacks he had grown accustomed to from NCP negotiators (especially by lead AEC negotiator Al-Khateeb). The President said that because the international community was represented on the AEC, there was no need to refer any CPA issue or problems to any international body such as IGAD.

ABYEI: LITTLE HOPE OF COMPROMISE

¶4. (C) Bashir spoke at length about Abyei, insisting that oil was not part of the equation. "There is no oil in Abyei," he claimed incredibly (he hasn't been talking to his Energy Minister evidently). Bashir said he and Salva Kiir had worked out an agreement on an Abyei administration. Kiir had carried the agreement back to Juba, where Foreign Minister-designate Deng Alor, an Abyei native and hardliner, had rejected it. The document had already been prepared for

his signature, the President said. Vraalsen said he left convinced that the NCP is unwilling to make any concessions on Abyei, or any of the CPA's problem issues. When asked whether he saw any common ground at all with the SPLM, Bashir changed the subject. Vraalsen said he warned the President that continued lack of progress on any of the CPA implementation would have serious consequences.

BASHIR BELITTLES KIIR, SPLM, AND SOUTHERNERS IN GENERAL

15. (C) Vraalsen characterized Al-Bashir's attitude toward Southerners as "not at all nice." He said Bashir never mentioned Salva Kiir by name, referring to him simply as "he" or "that man." Al-Bashir reportedly dismissed Southerners and the SPLM as indecisive and internally divided. Because the NCP is effective and united, Bashir confidently insisted that the NCP would always be the "winner" in any confrontation with the internally divided SPLM. It is true that Abyei is an internally divisive ethnic issue within the SPLM and the NCP, skilled at manipulating such fissures, is well aware of it.

16. (C) Comment: Vraalsen's pessimistic read-out may reflect a need to vent as he departs an enormously frustrating job. Nonetheless, his portrayal of an overly confident Bashir bashing the SPLM and Kiir does not bode well for the possibility of a resolution of the current political crisis. President Bashir clearly would prefer to work through the AEC than IGAD or another body, no doubt because he feels he can more easily control it. This makes the initiative currently underway (among the US, UK, Norwegian, Italian, and French Embassies) to strengthen the capacity and independence of the next AEC Chair particularly critical. The proposal to strengthen the role of the AEC Chair, drafted by the British

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Embassy, has been forwarded to AF/SPG for review.
FERNANDEZ